

The Use of Daily Math Journals

Children's math journals can be a notebook or paper stapled together. The question can be part of the morning message, oral discussion, or in a big book format you create.

In primary grades, (K-2) the activities should be quick and developed for students to have a high degree of success. In all grades, math journals should focus on student math reasoning and communication.

The many benefits of math journals:

* the ability for the teacher to highlight, review or spot check a concept briefly.
* cut down on the number of worksheets to be copied
* a good portfolio component
* students can keep journals at their desk, reducing the time it takes to pass out and collect worksheets
* allow students to write and/or draw their answers, increasing their problem solving ability
* encourage the process of discovery as students can learn to create their own math problems

Problem of the Day activities like those in Envision Math lend themselves very easily to math journal questions to get you started.

When creating your own word problems, it can be highly engaging to use the students' names and experiences.

With math journal problems and oral word problems you first have to teach them the process of *how* to solve word problems. You will want to review with them that there are different types of problems. Once you learn to recognize a certain type it is easier and faster to solve. Some types of problems are those with extra information, not enough information and two-step solutions. The students need to learn to recognize what type of word problem it is.

Initially every time you give the students a problem you should first go over what type it is. Chart it out. Make columns that detail important information and extra information. Draw the two-step process.